

WESTMILL WOODLAND BURIAL GROUND CIC

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Summer newsletter 2017



All Change!!

We wish Sarah Thacker-Pugsley all the best as she travels the waterways of England in a narrow boat with husband Colin who has just retired. We are so grateful to Sarah for all her kindness and efficiency over the six years she was with us and we wish her very well in her new more leisurely life.

I know many of our families are sad to think they will no longer get her reassuring voice on the end of the phone since she was often their first point of contact in approaching us here at Westmill.

We welcome Jan Power who joined us in April and who brings a wealth of experience to the job of Manager. I leave her to briefly introduce herself here and above you can see her admiring the lovely slim dark native bluebells that Rebecca Brain, who cares for the site, has introduced this year into the fringes of the willow copse.

I am delighted to be joining the Westmill team having been working for the last 3 years as a Funeral Director for the Co-op. I was based in Oxford briefly, Faringdon

and recently Carterton. My time there taught me a lot about how to organise funerals and I am excited to now be able to put this to good use working at Westmill.

Before becoming a funeral director I was in University administration and also worked as an analyst. I now live a much simpler life and balance my desk job at Westmill with dog walking locally so I can enjoy more time outdoors. I have a watery connection with Sarah because I have lived on a narrow boat locally for the last 6 years.

Local Death Cafes and Bereavement Journey

Sociologist Bernard Crettaz started hosting the first “cafe mortals” in Switzerland in 2004. In 2010 Jon Underwood began to host death cafes in the UK. The movement has continued to grow; more the 4500 cafes have happened in 49 countries over the last 6 years.

In case you're wondering, a death café is a place where people gather to drink tea, eat cake and discuss death. The aim is to increase awareness of death to help people make the most of life. There is no agenda and you can say as much or as little as you wish. It is run on a non-profit basis and no-one is there to sell you anything.

I am Rose-Anne O'Hare and work assist with funerals at the burial ground as well as being a bereavement counsellor and dementia specialist. I worked as a therapist in the NHS for 15 years. I have helped to host death cafes in Swindon and on a narrowboat on the Kennet and Avon canal. I have also co-facilitated a course on death and dying in Faringdon with Liz Rothschild. I will be hosting this café with Norma Fergusson. Norma is an Associate Vicar for the Shrivvenham and Ashbury Benefice and before this she worked for St John Ambulance. She has been involved with pastoral care - particularly of the dying and bereaved - for many years and volunteers as a chaplain at the Dorothy House Hospice.

We will also be running a course running over 6 weeks in Shrivvenham called the Bereavement Journey.

Some of the reasons why you might consider coming to a Death Cafe

Death is:-

- still a taboo
- interesting
- inevitable
- there is still fear around it
- some feel it is the enemy

A Death Cafe can:-

- help us to live more fully and lovingly
- answer some end-of-life questions
- everyone has their own questions

Dates for all these events on backpage of the newsletter.

Please do contact us with any questions
roseanne.o@outlook.com
rev.n.fergusson@btinternet.com



Just before we went to print we heard that Jon died very suddenly aged only 44. He was an inspirational, modest and visionary man

who created a seachange in how we talk about death.

*There is a fund to support his young family
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/jon-underwood>*

Our new Stonecarvers

As you all know we have worked for some years with Bartletts to produce our machine cut slate memorial tablets and Alec Peever producing handcarved work.

When Alec stopped we did not immediately locate a new stonecarver but now I am delighted to introduce our new team giving families the option again between hand and

machine cutting. Bernard will design them and Matthew will cut the stones.

Bernard Johnson set up his stone workshop eleven years ago. He trained in stonemasonry at City of Bath College following redundancy in his previous publishing career mostly at the Oxford University Press. Bernard specializes in craft

stonework including lettering and relief carving. He has completed hundreds of commissions for the local area and beyond. These include memorials, architectural plaques and signs, and garden features. All his lettering is hand-designed and hand-carved in a range of styles to suit the requirements of each job and the tastes of the client. His website is bernardjohnson.co.uk

Matthew Kopinski, has been working alongside Bernard for a year and a half. His previous career included working as a chef, a research scientist, journalist, and more recently as a production editor for the journals publisher Wiley Blackwell. Matthew is now working on his own commissioned work, including house names and memorials, and will be setting up a website shortly. Matthew also finds time to devote to country crafts and green issues.



He has recently worked as part of a team to develop the new Southill Solar energy farm near Charlbury.

The Pig Sty, their workshop, is a converted farm building in Kiddington, West Oxfordshire. Visitors are always welcome by appointment. Please phone Bernard on 07785 750597 or Matthew on 07748 094839. website is bernardjohnson.co.uk

Helping out with forensic archaeology research at Cranfield University

Two students from Cranfield Forensic Institute, are currently undertaking their Masters degree in Forensic Investigation.

In 2016, it was recorded that 571 homicides took place within England and Wales and more than 300,000 people are recorded missing each year; many of which are either be found alive or deceased but many still remain recorded as missing. Forensic archaeologists are still looking for non-invasive, systematic and cost effective ways of detecting clandestine burials occupied by homicide victims. Westmill is delighted to assist in any way we can to help this important work.

Rykker Evers

My research study at Westmill uses an unmanned aerial

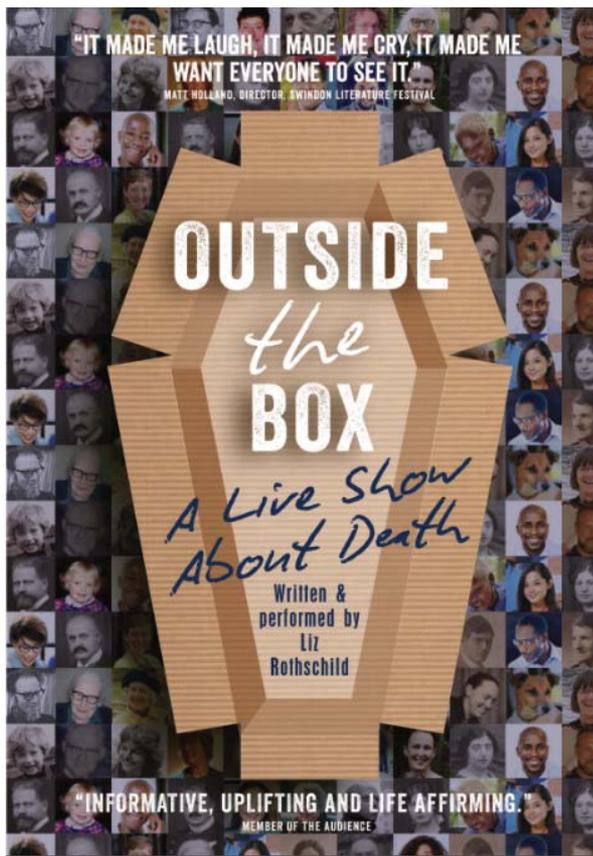
vehicle (UAV) attached with a digital infrared camera to see if crime scenes can be examined to detect the locations of clandestine burials and other evidence from the skies. If successful, this would be useful to police forces and forensic archaeologists avoiding causing damage on the ground to the area under investigation.

Natalie-lolita Adamonis-Simpson

My research is to examine current methods of using geophysics to detect human remains in secret or concealed burials where individuals are not meant to be found. The equipment being used for my research is a Geonics EM38, this equipment uses electromagnetics to detect disturbances in the ground.



Outside the Box *A Live show about death*



Liz is still touring her show around the country when she is not doing her day job.

To find tour dates, book a performance or read some of the wonderful stories and reviews she has received from audience members visit.

www.fullcircleproductions.org.uk

A big thank you for to everyone who contributed to making the Open Day in June such a success. Thanks to all our FFG members for showing people around, making tea and generally being lovely.

Thank you to Chris Park for showing people his beehives and to Sue Holden and Reverend Norma Fergusson for giving us such interesting talks on the work they are doing to support people locally.



Dates for the diary

DEATH CAFES IN SWINDON

Every second Tuesday of the month, 7pm to 8.30pm - Village Hotel (de Vere), Shaw Ridge, Swindon

DEATH CAFE - Longcot Methodist Chapel, Tuesday July 11th, 2 - 4pm.

BEREAVEMENT JOURNEY

Thursdays August 4, 11, 18, 25, September 1 and 8. It will be at Shrivvenham Methodist Church Hall at 2pm until 4pm.

WESTMILL MEMORIAL GATHERING

Saturday 16th September - tea and lantern making from 5.00
Ceremony - 6.10 - 7.10
Bring a jam jar and your wellies

FRIENDS AND FAMILY DAY

Saturday 18th November

11-1 Work morning. Planting trees, general repairs. Bring warm clothes, gloves and wellies.

1-2 Light lunch served by FFG members.

Please tell us if you want lunch so we have enough food. Donations for lunch to help cover costs.

2-3.00 AGM - Find out what has happen this year, meet our new committee, ask questions, make suggestions.

You are welcome to attend for just part of the day or all of it as suits you.

A good chance to meet others and spend time outside at the site.